

CLAIM AMENDMENTS:

Claim 1 (Original): A method for feeding a tape of slider-zipper assemblies to an applicator, said tape comprising a multiplicity of zipper segments, each of said zipper segments having a slider slidably mounted thereto, comprising the step of passing a portion of said tape through a channel having a cross section that allows passage therethrough of the slider of each successive slider-zipper assembly, said channel being formed to limit turning of said slider about any axis.

Claim 2 (Original): The method as recited in claim 1, wherein at least one slider resides within said channel at all times during said passing step.

Claim 3 (Original): An automated method for applying slider-zipper assemblies to a thermoplastic film, comprising the steps of:

forming slider stops at intervals along the length of a zipper tape;

mounting a respective slider along a respective length of said zipper tape lying between a respective pair of successive slider stops to form a tape of slider-zipper assemblies;

passing a portion of said tape through a channel having a cross section that allows passage therethrough of the slider of each successive slider-zipper assembly, said channel being formed to limit turning of said slider about any axis;

cutting off a slider-zipper assembly from said tape;
and

attaching said slider-zipper assembly to said thermoplastic film.

Claim 4 (Original): The method as recited in claim 3, wherein at least one slider resides within said channel at all times during said passing step.

Claim 5 (Original): The method as recited in Claim 3, further comprising the step of passing flange portions of said zipper tape through a nip between two rollers and driving the rotation of one of said rollers in a direction to pull said tape of slider-zipper assemblies through said channel.

Claims 6-19 (Canceled).

Claim 20 (New): A method of manufacture comprising the following steps:

(a) inserting a multiplicity of sliders on a tape made up of a pair of at least partially interlocked profiled zipper strips having mutually opposing extension flanges, said sliders being distributed along a length of said tape, one slider per package-length section of said tape;

(b) placing said tape with sliders inserted thereon so that a first portion of said tape and at least one slider thereon are disposed in a channel of a guideway, with the flanges of said first portion penetrating and protruding out of a longitudinal opening in the guideway;

(c) advancing a second portion of said tape with sliders inserted thereon, said second portion extending from a point upstream of the guideway to a point downstream of the guideway, and including said first portion of said tape inside said channel;

(d) joining the flanges of a package-length distal portion of said tape to film material; and

(e) cutting said tape and said film material to sever said distal portion of said tape from the rest of said

tape,

wherein the channel has a cross-sectional shape that limits turning of a slider about any axis as that slider travels inside the channel during tape advancement, and has a length equal to at least one package length.

Claim 21 (New): The method as recited in claim 20, wherein step (b) further comprises threading the flanges of a third portion of said tape through a nip formed by two rollers, said third portion of the tape being disposed upstream of said first portion of said tape, at least one of the rollers exerting a pulling force on said tape during tape advancement.

Claim 22 (New): The method as recited in claim 20, further comprising the step of forming a receptacle having an interior volume and a mouth with said distal portion of said tape installed therein.

Claim 23 (New): The method as recited in claim 20, further comprising the step of forming slider stops at intervals along the length of said tape prior to steps (b) through (e) being performed.

Claim 24 (New): The method as recited in claim 20, wherein step © is performed intermittently, while steps (d) and (e) are performed during intervening dwell times between advancements.